



Navajo Head Start

Community/ Parent Volunteer Handbook

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Our Mission

Navajo Head Start, an early childhood development organization established within the boundaries of the four sacred mountains, utilizing holistic services to empower children, families and communities to become self-sufficient. Through the practice of cultural skills and language, our children will gain a positive self-identity, strong self-esteem and confidence to become responsible citizens. Our team of dedicated service providers will exemplify high moral principles and commitment to quality services in preparing children to overcome educational and life challenges.

Our Vision

The strength of children, families and community. Exemplifying high moral principles and commitment to quality services. Dedicated to promoting safe and healthy families.

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Navajo Head Start volunteer program. Your desire to serve children in your community has been received and you are now able to enter our classrooms and/or administrative offices.

Volunteering and giving of your time is easy and fun. As a volunteer, we ask you to do three simple tasks:

1. Coordinate your schedule each week with teachers or school readiness coaches so they can make preparations for your service hours.
2. Sign-in and sign-out of Visitor sign in/out binder and volunteer time sheet to track your volunteer hours.
3. Be on time so that you do not interrupt services or instruction already in place.

As a new Navajo Head Start volunteer, you may have questions concerning the children in your class or specific questions about the program and needs. Our Head Start staff is available to help you. Please communicate any concerns or questions to the teacher or supervisor you are working with. Further assistance is available by contacting our administrative office at 928-871-6902.

Our administrative office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Our classroom hours are Monday through Thursday mornings 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

Your Volunteer Commitment

The Importance of Fulfilling Your Service

Navajo Head Start provides early childhood education to 2105 low-income and children with disabilities Monday through Thursday throughout the academic school year. Our classes begin in September and end in May.

Our purpose is to promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services that are determined, based on family needs assessments.

Funds to operate Navajo Head Start come directly from the federal government. However, the government only provides 80% of the funds necessary to operate our program. The other 20% must come from cash donations or in-kind contributions from our community. In-kind is the donation of time, space or materials used in the program that would otherwise be purchased.

Your volunteer contribution is critical to our program in helping us to reach our required non-federal match goals.

All volunteers must complete an application prior to volunteering in any of our centers. Regular volunteers, those donating four or more hours a week for four or more consecutive weeks, must also complete an orientation, background check and TB screening.

Volunteer Reminders

Please be aware:

- High sugar foods are restricted on the premises and are not to be given to children. Our classrooms have strict nutrition guidelines as mandated by the federal government.
- We have a “no nut” policy, this includes Almond Milk, on our premises. Please do not bring anything containing nuts.
- If you volunteer for two or more hours and would like to stay and have lunch with the kids we invite you to do so. Please inform the teacher if you will be staying so we can plan accordingly.
- We invite you to make recommendations for our lunch menu but please keep in mind that lunch is created by our nutrition team and must meet federal regulations. There are no exceptions unless medically necessary.
- Volunteers are not allowed to be alone with any staff or student.
- Volunteers should report any injuries immediately to a staff member.
- If you receive a call while volunteering, we ask that you please step out so as not to interrupt instruction.

Program Funding

In 1964, the Federal Government created a panel of child development experts to design a program to help communities overcome the barriers of young children living in poverty. The findings of that panel report became the blueprint for Project Head Start.

Navajo Head Start receives 80% of the funds necessary to operate our program from the federal government. The remaining 20% comes from in-kind contributions.

Participant contributions are important to support the program, therefore volunteer hours and donations are encouraged.

Holidays

Navajo Head Start observes the following Holidays:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving (3 days)

Christmas (7 days)

New Years Day

Martin Luther King Day

President's Day

Additional days closed:

All Navajo Tribal Holidays

Professional Development Days (varies each month)

April Spring Break (5 days)

POSITIVE GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES IN THE HEAD START CLASSROOM

Two primary goals of the Head Start program are to help each child develop self-esteem and self-discipline. By using positive interactions and guidance techniques, the adults in a child's life will promote each child's self-confidence and self-control in a supportive and secure environment. Children should be aware of their own worth, while learning to respect the rights of others. Discipline of children can be a personal issue, but while at Head Start, we require that all employees and volunteers follow these guidelines:

- Show respect for each child. Refrain from shaming a child or labeling his/her behavior "naughty" or "bad, avoid comparing children.
- Build a child's self-esteem by encouraging independence, listening to him, and accepting his feelings.
- Plan experiences in which children are successful at accomplishing challenges. In order to develop self-confidence, young children need to experience success most of the time.
- Develop a few simple rules with the input of the children and refer to them consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior and follow the classroom rules. The best way for a child to learn rules is to observe adults who follow them.
- Enforce rules in a positive, non-personal way, such as, "It's time to wash your hands, David."
- Avoid power struggles. Encourage each child to participate in finding acceptable solutions to problems and conflicts.
- Use your voice as a tool (usually a quiet, firm voice). Never plead, threaten or scream.
- Reinforce the children's actions that you want repeated. Notice positive behavior and ignore minor misbehavior, such as improper language.
- Allow children of comparable size and ability to work out their own solutions if they can do so without hurting themselves or others.
- Offer choices to children, but only choices between acceptable alternatives, such as, "Do you want to pick up the car or the truck?" Or, "Do you want me to decide?"
- Move closer to a situation, or a problem you are anticipating.
- State rules in a positive rather than a negative form. "Use a quiet, inside voice," rather than "Don't yell!"
- When necessary, redirect a child's attention to another activity.
- Encourage a child to "use your words" rather than hitting.
- Set conditions. "When you wash your hands, you may have a snack."
- As a last option, if a child is hurting himself or others, provide a quiet area for the child. Gently move him from the group to a quiet area of the classroom. The purpose is to help the child calm down. "Let me know when you feel better inside and then you may return."

Volunteer Expectations

These expectations are intended to help volunteers adhere to acceptable practices in the classroom.

1. Please use positive guidance with children. For positive guidance guidelines, see the attached handout.
2. Respect the training and expertise of the classroom staff – whose responsibility it is to teach and discipline the children. This is your opportunity to support the everyday activities of the classroom by following the teacher’s instructions.
3. If you are not sure what to do, please ask.
4. Never allow yourself to be alone with a child either in the classroom or out of visual range of a teacher on the playground or in the restroom.
5. For your protection and to help children understand the appropriate boundaries they should maintain with strangers do not permit children to climb on you or sit on your lap. When interacting closely with children, have them sit beside you.
6. Focus your attention on multiple children and activities. Visually scan the room frequently, if you see children playing alone, try to help them interact with other children.
7. Please remember that this is a professional environment and you will be expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner while here.
8. Teachers reserve the right to suggest reassignment to more appropriate volunteer experiences, if needed.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

As indicated by Head Start Program Performance Standard 1304.52 (i) (1) (i, ii, iii, iv), it is expected that employees, Policy Council, Board members, volunteers and consultants will conduct themselves in accordance with high standards of work performance and professional conduct. Observing standards of conduct allows employees, Policy Council, Board members, consultants, and volunteers to work together harmoniously and enables Navajo Head Start (NHS) to maintain efficient operations.

As an employee, Policy Council, Board member, volunteer of NHS, I agree to abide by the program's standards of conduct as outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards and NHS's policies and procedures including but not limited to:

- No child shall be left alone or unsupervised at any time.
- Use positive methods of child guidance which do not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, isolation or the use of food as punishment or reward or the denial of basic needs or engage in any other behavior deemed inappropriate by staff.
- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, age or disability.
- Follow the program confidentiality policy concerning information about children, families, and staff members. Family files, personnel records, financial information, and other related information is considered confidential. Protection of this information is expected by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discussing it only with those who have a legitimate need to know.
- Not solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value for personal use or enrichment from contractors/vendors or potential contractors/vendors who have been awarded contracts or provide services or materials for NHS.
- Refrain from engaging in any activity, practice or conduct which conflicts with, or appears to conflict with the interests of the program and disclose all real or apparent conflicts of interest (financial, business or personal) if they exist.
- Conform to section 642 (c)(1)(C) of the 2007 Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, which stipulates that Board members (include Policy Council members at NHS) not be employed by, nor immediate family members be employed by NHS.
- If approached by members of the news media requesting information regarding NHS operations, refer requests to the Assistant Superintendent.

I understand the above list is not all-inclusive and that any act contrary to prudent conduct on NHS's premises is prohibited. I understand the following penalties for violations of any of the above Standards of Conduct.

- Employee – Violating NHS's standards of conduct may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination with or without prior notice. These standards are not intended to alter the at-will status of employment with NHS.
- Volunteer – A volunteer who violates any of the above Standards of Conduct will be sent home immediately and will not be allowed to volunteer for the program.
- Policy Council or Board Member – Violation of Standards of Conduct are delineated in the governing body by-laws.

Print Name

Signature

Date

I am an (a):

- Employee
- Volunteer
- Policy Council or Board Member